

NC ABC Commission Launches Anti-Underage Drinking Effort in Mecklenburg County

Campaign sets out to raise awareness, targets parents

CHARLOTTE, NC – January 28, 2015: The North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABC) held a regional launch event today for its new statewide campaign targeting underage drinking in North Carolina. The campaign, called Talk It Out, is a multi-media campaign designed to raise awareness of the issue, and to give parents the right tools for talking to kids about the dangers of underage drinking.

During an assembly at Quail Hollow Middle School in Charlotte today, NC ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner discussed various components of the campaign, including the Commission's original body of research, *The State of Underage Drinking in North Carolina*, as well as broadcast, web, social media and a series of events and activities across the state.

"We're here in Charlotte today to launch a regional effort to raise awareness of underage drinking in North Carolina as part of the Talk It Out campaign," said Gardner. "Since we launched the statewide campaign in December 2014, we have received a true outpouring of support for this initiative. Underage drinking is an issue that has been swept under the rug for far too long."

The Commission's research uncovered that children think underage drinking is a much bigger problem than their parents. The average age children in North Carolina take their first drink is 13.9 – earlier than most adults tend to think. Most parents – more than 60% – don't feel fully prepared to properly address underage drinking with their children, while children reported that they want and expect their parents to talk to them about the real issue of underage drinking.

"We extend our deepest appreciation to those who have had the courage to share their stories, and for lending their voice and support to this campaign. Unfortunately, there are many others – too many – out there who know the same kind of grief. With this campaign, we're here to start raising awareness of the problem, and doing something about it by getting the conversation started between parent and child," said Gardner.

In addition to the Commission's research, several new campaign resources were unveiled during the event, including resources to help raise awareness of the issue and combat the problem, TV and radio advertisements currently airing across the state, and a video featuring NC citizens who have experienced first-hand the traumatic consequences of underage drinking.

"Losing a child is something you don't expect to have happen to you. You just can't even comprehend what my family's gone through, and it's a pain that just doesn't go away," said Steve Sciascia, Town of Harrisburg Mayor. "I want to make sure that parents know that this happens, and it can happen to your children. And it doesn't matter whether they're 11 or 20. It's underage drinking, and it has a consequence."

NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Aldona Vos joined speakers in addressing more than 300 eighth graders, their parents, school system representatives and elected officials who gathered to learn more about the campaign.

“As a retired doctor and as a mother of twins, I am here to tell you that you are the most priceless commodity we have in the world. The decisions you are making now will impact you, your friends, your families and the path you take in the future,” said Wos in a call to students. “We do know that talking about these things makes a difference. Take charge of your life, and insist that your parents talk to you. And if they’re not listening, speak louder.”

To access the Commission’s research, campaign resources and more information, visit www.TalkItOutNC.org.

ABOUT THE NC ABC COMMISSION

North Carolina is one of 17 states to regulate alcohol through a control system. Since 1937, the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission has provided regulation and control over the sale, purchase, transportation, manufacture, consumption and possession of alcoholic beverages in the state of North Carolina. The Commission oversees permits allowing alcohol sales by more than 18,000 retail outlets across the state. <http://abc.nc.gov>.

###

Media Contact:

Luther Snyder

Executive Director, NC Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking

NC ABC Commission

Luther.Snyder@abc.nc.gov

919-779-8367 (o)

919-632-4828 (c)